

Changes to estate building plan lack support

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The Crosby Estate, a 722-acre development of million-dollar homes east of Rancho Santa Fe, wants to eliminate a hotel from its plan and build a commercial center along Del Dios Highway instead.

So far, the estate's neighbors have not embraced the idea.

The exact composition of the proposed center is unknown, said Rudy Svrcek, a manager with Crosby, but it would include 5,000 square feet of retail and 25,000 square feet of commercial space.

Svrcek said Crosby, which is about two miles southwest of Hodges Dam on the south side of Del Dios Highway, wants to eliminate the 250-room hotel/conference center because the hotel market is soft.

"(The market is) really, really off, so it just doesn't make sense," Svrcek said.

The County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors have to approve any changes to Crosby's specific plan, said Marette Esperance, a county planner. A date has not been set for the issue to go before the commission.

Besides the 7-acre commercial center, Crosby has proposed moving the golf course club house away from the entrance at Del Dios to the center of the development where the hotel was to be. The estate also has proposed rearranging the housing, but the number of units would remain the same at 443, Svrcek said.

He said the changes would ease traffic on Del Dios Highway, which is overburdened with 17,000 vehicles a day.

"When we pull the resort (hotel) out it's a clear traffic reducer," Svrcek said of Crosby's traffic studies.

However, the San Dieguito Planning Group, which advises the Board of Supervisors on proposed developments in the area, voted against the changes at a recent meeting, chairman Ken King said.

"The feeling of the group was they didn't want commercial out there because it was traffic-inducing," he said.

"What we recommended is they take the site and turn it into playing fields," King said. "The group felt that playing fields there would help get the kids off the roads," as parents from the new developments of Cielo and Crosby drive to fields outside their neighborhoods.

Cielo is across Del Dios Highway from the Crosby Estate.

Jim Ashcraft, chairman of the Rancho Santa Fe Association's road and traffic committee, agreed with King.

"It's traffic inducing," Ashcraft said. "There's far more traffic with a shopping center" than a hotel.

He said a commercial center along Del Dios Highway would draw Crosby residents toward the development's northern gate, where no retail was planned, and away from its southern gate, which is oriented toward Rancho Bernardo.

"They have shopping centers to the south toward Rancho Bernardo, and that's where the traffic should remain," Ashcraft said.

Keith Behner, planning director for the Rancho Santa Fe Association, said the proposed commercial center accentuates a lack of overall planning for new developments in the San Dieguito planning area.

"The association has been saying all along we see the development, we see the people that are coming into the area, what we don't see is the infrastructure," Behner said.

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